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13 May 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Prospects for the Situation in the Lebanon

1. The situation: With the Army standing by passively and the Lebanese opposition to President Chamoun receiving significant assistance from the UAR, public disorders are likely to increase to the point at which they place unacceptable pressures upon the President.

2. There is little prospect that President Chamoun can at this point persuade the Army to withdraw its demand for his resignation and take the action necessary to restore order.

3. Lebanese opposition: Although the UAR is clearly active in promoting and participating in public disorders, it appears unlikely that it is working in collaboration with the main body of the Lebanese political opposition to Chamoun.

4. The Lebanese political opposition is likely to seek to take advantage of the situation by removing Chamoun from the Presidency and replacing him with their own candidate. It is likely to seek to persuade the US to accept this as the best alternative to a continued deterioration of the

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Lebanese situation and the movement of the Lebanon into the UAR.

5. Alternatives for Chamoun: Chamoun may be toying with the idea of invoking the Eisenhower doctrine, but it is unclear how US force could be applied if, as appears to be the case, Chamoun does not have the support of his own Army and the "Syrian invasion" is in the form of extensive infiltration of agitators and gun-runners.

6. The only feasible way out for Chamoun seems to be for him to select a successor acceptable to the Army and to persuade General Chéhab to restore order in exchange for Chamoun's withdrawal.

7. Consequences of Chamoun's withdrawal: If Chamoun withdraws from the Presidency under pressure of UAR-supported agitation it will be widely believed in the area that the policy of alignment with the US has received a heavy blow and that the principle of "neutrality" has had another triumph.

8. UAR objectives: We believe that the UAR's objective in the Lebanon is to destroy Chamoun and discredit the policy of association with the West and that the UAR is unlikely to push the disorders in the Lebanon any further than is necessary to accomplish this end. They are unlikely to seek to bring

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the Lebanon into the UAR at this time.

9. Prospects for Chamoun's successor: Whether Chamoun is succeeded by a person of his own choice or by a choice of the opposition, Lebanon is likely to abandon Chamoun's policies of alignment with the West and move toward neutralism. Even if the Moslem opposition comes into power, however, it is unlikely to sacrifice Lebanon's independence by joining the UAR.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

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